

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE BLOGGERS ROUNDTABLE WITH MAJOR GENERAL DOUGLAS STONE,  
DEPUTY COMMANDING GENERAL, DETAINEE OPERATIONS, MULTI-NATIONAL FORCE IRAQ  
SUBJECT: UPDATE ON DETAINEE OPERATIONS MODERATOR: CHARLES J. "JACK" HOLT, CHIEF,  
NEW MEDIA OPERATIONS, OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE PUBLIC  
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GEN. STONE: Hello, this is Major General Doug Stone calling from  
Baghdad -- Task Force 134.

MR. HOLT: Yes, sir.

General Stone, welcome to the Bloggers' Roundtable this morning. We've  
got a few folks online, have got some more that have stated that they were --  
they may be joining us here as we get in -- as we get started, but they can join  
us and we'll let them catch up. We do appreciate you being with us again today.

GEN. STONE: Sure.

MR. HOLT: And sir, if you've got an opening statement, the floor is  
yours. GEN. STONE: All right.

Well, let me just give you a quick rundown. And I know some people  
were on the last call that we did and some weren't, but today in Iraq -- Multi-  
National Forces-Iraq detention, we have 25,188 detainees; 4,562 of them are  
Shi'a, that's 18.1 percent of the population; 20,581 are Sunni, that's 81.7  
percent of the population -- slight increase, as those who've been tracking this  
might note, in the number of Shi'a. In October, our ending population was  
25,504 and for the first time now -- since at least I've been here and that was  
-- I got here in April, and of course, have been through the surge -- we've had  
them either leveling or an arithmetic drop. And I don't know statistically if  
it's a full drop, but November ended in 25,247 and you can tell from my earlier  
comment that we're down to 25,188 today.

For the year we've had 18,180 intakes or detainees. That is the  
largest year of intakes by a number of -- a couple of thousand since we started  
this operation in 2003. And we now have 7,231 releases. That's the smallest  
number of any year since 2003. Since July -- I think I may have chatted with  
you guys about the new programs we put together, which you know, include  
administrative panels, the individual's pledge before an Iraqi judge and the new  
services and courses, which I can talk about later. But we've had 3,305  
releases and we're guardedly optimistic that we've only had three recaptures  
from July to now and zero recidivists -- that means that of the recaptures, none  
of them were counter-coalition. They were rolled up for, you know,  
interrogation or questioning or something like that.

So the command is encouraged by the low recapture and recidivist rate. That's a combination of the situation on the ground of the great work of the coalition forces to provide the degree of security; the Iraqi provincial and tribal leadership that, you know, are setting the tone and tenor that they don't want to continue on with counter- coalition activities; the actions and the programs that we've put in place in theater internment facilities -- and if you've ever tracked the numbers, just the historical natural tendency of detainees to not to return to the fight. So that's all encouraging and what we're looking for is, you know, that detainee who's no longer an imperative security risk and you know, then we're in the business of moving him on.

The daily intake has dropped from an average of 61 per day, which was -- and I can't give you the exact date, but about four weeks ago, five weeks ago maybe -- to an average intake today of around 40. The releases have remained very constant for the better part of the last two months at 49 a day. And while we have no target number yet, we are encouraged by the results of our panels. And for those who are listening in who may recall, we started panels with three military officers -- you know, bicultural, bilingual adviser -- some time ago and we've now run 15,000 detainees through a personal panel to, you know, further ask questions about their situation that got them into detention in the first place; more than 7,000 are in basic education courses; 1,000 are now taking advantage of the religious discussions that we have by the imams that we've hired; and more than 3,000 are being in paid jobs. We have launched a brand new Islamic civics course, which we're going to make mandatory for all detainees after their release has been decided upon. And we have at the in-processing part, a brand new battery of questions and counselors and psychologists who are interviewing them when they come in to determine their education, vo-tech, their employment, their motivations, religious orientation.

Significant, I think, is the detainee-on-detainee and detainee-on-guard SIGEX (sp) -- those are the kinds of things that we record every day -- are at historical lows -- 20 percent of last year, and that's immaterial, because last year it was half the population with, you know, four-fifths higher the number of SIGEX (sp). So today with twice the population, we only have 20 percent.

I'd like to make sure the listeners know that all of these programs are voluntary, that they're all a Sunni and Shi'a mix when we can. Clearly, with only, you know, 4,500 Shi'a and 20,000 Sunni, not everybody can be in the same class. But all the work programs and the religious discussion programs are all mixed. We continue on with bringing back refugees to work in our program and we're getting some very encouraging news about business folks who want to invest in job programs for the detainees upon their release -- although we haven't formalized that yet, we're guardedly optimistic about their involvement.

We've had -- at our releases we've had Prime Minister Maliki, Vice President Hashmi, Vice President Mahdi and other ministers all attend in front of 30 to 40 press outlets, who are then free to interview any one of the detainees -- then releasees -- about any portion of their detention, any portion of the time that they were, you know, under our custody or what their plans are for the release. And they wade into them and they talk to them and that is well advertised throughout the Islamic press.

And then the last thing I'll tell you is the corps is running polls, and we've had for the first time since 2003 a positive lift in the impression of coalition management of detention.

And I think with that I'll sort of stop and listen to any questions you may have.

MR. HOLT: All right, sir. Thank you very much.

Andrew Lubin, you were first online. Why don't you get us started?

Q General, good afternoon. Andrew Lubin from U.S. Cavalry ON Point -- good to talk to you again, sir.

GEN. STONE: You bet. Q General, you're bringing in around 21 people per day less. Is this because there's less bad guys out there or people are doing fewer bad things, or to what do you attribute the drop in the intake, which I assume is also good news?

GEN. STONE: Well, I think -- I mean, the simple answer is that the corps is detaining less people and then the question is, why is the corps detaining less people? And the answer is because they feel they're finding less individuals who would be an imperative security risk. You know, the environments in which they're at -- let's just take, you know, the area that has contributed more than a third of all the detainees: Al Anbar.

We've gone weeks without any detention coming out of Al Anbar at all.

So I think the answer is because the environment where they're at is, you know, systematically getting more secure and those that are a threat or who have been incented to be a threat, intimidated to be a threat or are, you know, just looking for quick cash -- which represents a big chunk of the guys we have -- those guys are dwindling down. It's not as -- it's not as, you know, intense an environment as it was.

Q What about -- where are most of the people coming from? Do you track the areas where they're being arrested?

GEN. STONE: Oh, yeah. Of course I do.

And let me make a distinction -- and I know you guys are really good about this when you write -- but remember, detention is under the U.N. Security Resolution. And so this is not an arrest. The Iraqis actually arrest. They have a pretrial, pre-confinement concept that, you know, is really a functional arrest. We detain. And we detain because they're an apparent security risk. So I tend not to use the word "arrest" because we don't. And I tend not to use the word "prison," despite the actual word -- (speaking in Arabic) -- is the same word in Arabic. We run detention centers. This is a passing comment.

But I think, I mean, I think the answer is most of our -- first of all, the answer's yes. I have it and I'm quickly going through some information I have here. But most of the current intake is coming from MND-North and MND-Baghdad. Those are where most of the detainee populations are coming in from right now, yeah -- and then, of course, the stir up -- a modest number in the west. And I guess some as well in the north, but nothing in northeast, central, southeast. So that's where our numbers are coming from. That's Baghdad and north.

Q Great. Okay.

MR. HOLT: Okay.

And Matt. Q Hi, General. It's good to speak to again. It's Matt Armstrong with MountainRunner.

GEN. STONE: Hey, Matt. How are you doing?

Q I'm doing fine, thank you.

A couple things: One is, the last time we talked, you were talking about an event that blew your mind. And I was wondering if the PAO could provide more specifics and follow up? This was the issue where the moderates threw the extremists up against a fence and shaved their beards.

GEN. STONE: Yeah -- (laughs).

Q Everyone I share that story with is also blown. So I was hoping that your PAO could send some more information, because I want to talk about it.

GEN. STONE: Well --

Q Yeah, go ahead.

GEN. STONE: I will do exactly that. My PAO is looking at me and there -- let me just tell you: There have been multiple stories like this now. And when they first happened, I mean, it was -- you know, in our quiet little world that isn't, you know, sexy and interesting to people -- for us it was like -- I don't know how to describe it. Sort of like, you know, scoring 98 yards or something. I mean, this is a big deal.

And what we had were moderates who said, Listen, you know, we don't want that direction." Now, since that time, I can almost tell you daily that we have events that are sometimes quite subtle. The moderates will turn in the extremists. And this is -- a long with MDHU's -- our modular detainee housing units, which are confinement areas -- very nice, by the way, confinement areas with indoor plumbing and air conditioning and heating -- we can now isolate these -- isolate's a strong word. We can now put them into these units by 15's, whereas of course, they've been in the 500 to 1,000 compounds.

So now that we can physically do that, almost every day groups of 50 to 100 to 150 to 200 will self-identify the guys, will pull them out. And then instantly everybody will want to go to school and will hold classes. I mean, the demand for classes and school has stripped my 150 teachers. The demand for the religious discussion group, which only is a four-day sort of orientation into the basics, just far exceeds my ability to provide it. I've got 43 imams. And you know, that's not something you can -- like in teaching I can grab a hold of guys that have had advanced degrees before in detention and we can -- and we do monitor maybe a class of 100, you know, with papers and pencils and white boards from outside of the fence. But it is stunning if you're on the ground right now to look at the thousands and thousands who have essentially been freed up from these extremists.

And of course, it started back in September with those two events that oddly enough took place -- one in Camp Cropper, which was the situation where the guys said, you know, look. You guys aren't going to push us around. We're going to shave your beard. They started that, and of course, we broke that up, but I mean, that was the start. And then down in Bucca two days later, they took almost 40 guys and locked them in the water closets. I mean, you know,

physically locked them in until we could get in with the guards and pull them out. And it was essentially a moderate revolt. Now, it's an every day event.

And if you looked at the 34 compounds, you would see them turning green -- just the green, amber and red. The red is shrinking down. You know, on the daily report that I get it's the only locations where we have significant detainee-on-detainee or detainee-on-guard kinds of things. I can't go through all the intel, but I can tell you, the fundamental messaging from the extremists outside who have been reporting about detention and inside is "we've lost control; we're losing control." You know, they genuinely, I think, believed that they had ideological recruiting and training control over the compounds inside the theater internment facilities and they have genuinely lost it. I mean, we still have very tough slugging to go in some areas, but we are shrinking them down and the first 960 have pulled out and put into these MDHU's. And pulling 1,000 out of, you know, 21,000 down at Bucca has made a huge difference.

And as -- you know, let me just give you an example: When do you think in detention I could have taken my boss, General Petraeus, walked into a compound and had them all chant "Petraeus, Petraeus, Petraeus," sit down with him, sit in a classroom and let him talk to them -- you know, a classroom of 50 -- sit and talk: Where are you from? What did you do? Where do you sit? And they all got their class books out and they're talking about what they're learning. And he asked them, "What are you going to do when you leave? Where are you going to go?" Walk into the vo-tech portion and I mean, literally have detainees hanging around him while he's talking to them. I mean, when do you think in this conflict we could have ever done that? Well, that just happened last week!

So I mean, there is a change and it goes to the nature of those that have been detained. I think they're fundamentally unemployed and moderate, but they are led by the intense extremists. But to the COIN -- to prove the COIN manual, you separate those guys out, you can get the mind share of the remaining guys and you can make a change.

I mean, you know, I don't change people, right? Those people or God changes them, not me, but we do set in motion the ability to have that change take place. So you bet. We'll have the PAO try to publish some of these, but I must tell you, they're daily and they come in small ways and they come in big ways. But I think I caught you guys right at when that had first happened. And of course, you know, in our own little quiet world where, you know, nobody saw anything particularly interesting, we were just over-the-top happy, because for us that's a big shift. Over to you.

MR. HOLT: Yes, sir. That was an amazing story.

Matt, did you have a follow up?

Q I did, actually, thanks.

I'd also like to get information on the Islamic civics courses that you just mentioned.

GEN. STONE: You bet you. I'll be glad to do that. We are going to be publishing those as a workbook for the detainees to take when they leave. We're even thinking about it being part of a kind of -- I don't want to use the word

jobs program, but I mean, you know, some sort of constant relationship for the next six months.

I think you guys asked me about this last time. You know, how are you going to keep track of them after they leave? And we've been working hard on that. And we have, I think, a really good proposal; and we're hoping by the end of December we'll have something implemented. So maybe we can get back together. But this is our methodology, in part, to stay in touch with them on the other side to see, you know, whatever it takes to keep them out of the fight.

Q That's great. And you also mentioned before that you spoke with Vice President Hashmi and he kept pushing for a New Deal-type program.

Is there any update you can give on that?

GEN. STONE: The New Deal concept was really sort of an Iraqi-wide program. And the concept of -- and I want to parse these between two things: detainees, which is the program I'm talking about, that I'm working on right now; and then the overall Iraq-wide employment, which was a recommendation, and the latter is over -- being worked on by a different staff group here and I'm still pushing very hard and hoping as all of us are doing that we can take and leverage the experience that we have in the CLC, the local -- the community groups -- and turn them into full time jobs and, of course, try to get more of these programs going and then get a public works program going.

But that is not -- that is -- in and of itself that is not advanced but the detainee follow-on employment is very close to having an announcement on something and I just want to make sure I've got everything locked and -- but I think clearly by the end of December I'll be able to say whether that's a go and of course that's my target population. You know, as we begin to move these detainees back into the society you want to keep them out of the fight, and some of those very fundamental employment, fear, intimidation issues are critical to keeping them out and. Of course, our recidivist rate right now is zero and that's a statistical -- you know, statistically a significant number at this point with 3,300 released since January -- or July.

Q General, thank you very much.

MR. HOLT: Okay.

GEN. STONE: You bet, my friend.

MR. HOLT: Christian?

Q Hey, General Stone, it's Christian Lowe here with military.com. It's good to talk to you again since I came over here from Marine Corps Times.

GEN. STONE: Ooh Rah! That's right.

Q So, General Stone, I got two follow-ups for you from two issues that you brought up earlier. One is the detainees -- the moderate detainees pulling out the fundamentalists and also on the issue of these religious civics classes. The first follow-up is to what do you attribute this change of sort of atmospherics in the detainee population that they feel safe enough to pull these fundamentalists out without fear of reprisal on their families or on them when they return to civilian, you know, to -- basically when they're

released. Number two, on the Islamic civics courses, what do you say to critics who might think that it's probably not in the -- it shouldn't be the U.S.'s role to teach Islam to Muslims?

GEN. STONE: Okay. Let me see if I can -- you may have to help me because I was -- on the first issue -- why do they feel safer -- I think the answer has three parts. The first is that they now understand the process. There's a process where they're going to go before an administrative review board. Their records of performance and how they've conducted themselves inside the detention facility are now material. They're engaged in that. They understand the process. They sit and, you know, in front of this panel.

I will tell you the boss, General Petraeus, sat on one of those panels and for 30 minutes asked the guy questions the other day. I mean, you know, they understand there's going to be a consequence to their actions. They also understand that they're going to have their opportunity for really the first time ever to engage in a discussion why they got there in the first place and what it is that we want from them, and what we want is for them not to go back to the fight and not to be (an imperative ?) security risk, period. So I think that's had a lot to do with it.

The second thing is that we've given them a number of ways to contact us without them being able to identify who they are, and I'd rather not go into those although, you know -- I mean, they're not classified. They're just sort of trade secrets. But let me just leave it with you that the detainees themselves now know how they can inform us without having to have their name, their family, their tribe identified with the -- you know, with the notification. Did I answer that question because I have -- I want to jump to the next one.

Q I guess what I'm wondering is, you know, more about do they feel -- you know, the fundamentalists sort of rule over them with terror, right? So they're afraid --

GEN. STONE: That's right.

Q -- that if they don't cow to the fundamentalists when they leave they'll get killed or their family will be killed on the outside unless they, you know, adhere to what the fundamentalists say. I mean, is there a change in the security environment exterior to your world that allows them to --

GEN. STONE: Oh, yeah.

Q -- to publicly throw people up against a fence and say these are the bad guys and shave their beards? I mean, I seem to remember -- GEN. STONE: You're right. I mean, it is easier for them to now be able to do that on the inside but I want to be clear. A lot of these guys don't know each other. I mean, they're not from -- we don't organize the compounds by geographical area so they really don't know each other. I mean, they might in some areas but generally speaking the guys that know each other are the guys that are the extremists. They really do know each other and they come in to set up kind of a gang court. So I think the knowledge base about who they are is not as -- is not as common as you might think. We don't put, for example, all the guys in the same village in al Anbar in the same area. I mean, they're spread out.

Q Right.

GEN. STONE: So that's one thing. But I think as I tried to say in my opening comment, I really believe that the external environment does not support returning to the fight. You know, our zero recidivist rate, you know, is so significant -- I mean, you can't assign that to the work that we're doing at the tip. I mean, you can say it helped but you can't say it's the primal motivator. So, you know, they're going back and their tribal leaders and others are saying that's not what we're doing anymore. I mean, we're already getting that message. We're bringing speakers in from the tribes to say, "Hey, guys, it ain't the way it was." I mean, to their credit the vice presidents when they talk to them at their releases tell them that -- the judges tell them that. We're showing them the news, you know, telling them what the hell's going on so they get it.

So I think that's a big part of it. I think it's a combination of things but they do feel secure enough inside the theater internment facility to do it and I think genuinely they feel like, you know, they want to get out -- they want to go back to their families. They don't want to be in detention. They understand why they're in detention and they at least to this day have proven that they're not going to go back so it's a good news scenario.

Q And on the Islamic --

GEN. STONE: Can I cover that -- go ahead.

Q And on the Islamic civics courses, you know, what about critics -

GEN. STONE: Yeah.

Q -- who might say we -- the U.S. really has no business in setting up this kind of education to Muslims?

GEN. STONE: Well, first of all, these are Muslims teaching Muslims. I mean -- and second of all, they're all voluntary so they don't have to go. You know, they want to go. They want to go for a number of reasons. I mean, one, they're intellectually interested in it. Second of all, everybody else is going so they want to go, and thirdly, they're encouraged by the Iraqis who teach these courses to go. I mean, we don't say go stand up, you know, and go. That's their choice. So I would say I'm facilitating it but I'm definitely not teaching it. I mean, this is all taught in Arabic. You know, it's all taught with --

Q You speak Arabic.

GEN. STONE: -- you know, by imams. Pardon me?

Q But you speak Arabic, right?

GEN. STONE: Yeah, I do but I don't -- I'm not that fluent. I mean, I could not have a intellectual debate about, you know -- (inaudible) -- along with, you know, I mean, the Koran.

Q Don't sell yourself short.

GEN. STONE: I'm sorry?

Q Don't sell yourself short.



GEN. STONE: Yeah. (Laughs.) Well -- but also let me tell you -- I want to make sure we don't get two things mixed up. The religious discussion, which is a four-day retreat, if you will, and in a sense it is kind of a retreat because we take them from one compound to another locked down compound and they live there so I mean it's that old sort of business retreat where you go off to the mountain shack.

But the reality is they're mixed in and they are genuinely engaged in a conversation -- a Socratic conversation -- without our presence in there about the Koran and they come out, you know, understanding the difference between what the extremists have said or, and this is really the case -- what the extremists have made them memorize versus what's actually in the Koran.

So you know, I think that's a very healthy thing and, you know, and again, you know, if they don't want to do it they don't have to do it. The second issue is civics. Now, this is a genuinely civics course. I mean -- I'm sorry, I'm searching for my book -- I just don't have it right in front of me here -- but the -- but it has in there, you know, why you should try to get an education -- why you should try to have a job. You know, it's got a course in there -- and there's 20 some courses -- how do you control anger. I mean, now all of this also has Islamic -- I'm sorry, Koranic references to it and again, I want to be clear about something. For most Americans who come from the perspective, "Jeez, you shouldn't be teaching religion in, you know, in a course that's not Islam," Islam itself is -- it's embedded in its religion so it needs to put things in the context of the Muslim faith and that's how they do it.

So again, we've worked with a group in England who has been very successful with this program. You know, we're still learning a little bit about it but we have published it and, you know, we've got the -- here, my aide just handed it to me -- it's got things like the oath of peace, the sacredness of life and property, loving humanity and avoiding hatred, antisocial behavior, community work, elections, being a student, controlling anger, companionship, being a good Muslim, good citizen, earning a living, you know, tolerance -- respect and tolerance for humanity.

So they're good courses and each one are laid out in a format that we've worked very hard on which have the learning objectives, the qualities, you know, and then the lesson, the activities. And then each one includes in there a Koranic, you know, sort of reference to give these guys some reason why it has a lynchpin back. So it's a -- to me it's exactly the right thing to be doing and, you know, for anybody that may be critical of it I would just say I'm not teaching their religion and I'm not teaching Islam. There are -- these are Muslims to a T. There's no -- I mean, there's 32 Christians in there. They also -- by the way the Christians get along perfectly well with everybody and they attend these civics courses and they're very comfortable as well so --

Q Okay.

GEN. STONE: I don't know -- I think it's the right thing to do and I think it's, you know, it's helping with the understanding of the difference between a moderate and an extremist, and I think that's the key. As you guys know I'm a big believer that you empower the moderates and they will marginalize the extremists and it's not -- you know, it's the battlefield of the mind and it is -- you know, it is something that we have to have an ally in the moderates and in my case, you know, I mean, I'm not out in the open population. I'm in --

my guys are in detention so these guys already took a shot at us or tried to so they're not, you know, they're not the everyday normal guy.

Q All right. Thanks a lot.

MR. HOLT: All right, sir.

GEN. STONE: All right, my friend.

MR. HOLT: We're running short of time but Bruce McQuain?

Q Yeah, I'm not sure how to formal -- or put this into a succinct package here but my question has to do with -- obviously, General -- Bruce McQuain with qando -- obviously, General, you classify the detainees when they come in -- you categorize them or whatever and they fall into certain groups I would assume -- the moderates as you've been talking about and the fundamentalists, et cetera. Have you seen a change in what you're taking in now versus what you took in previously and has that sort of distilled in the drop from 61 to 40? Are you getting -- I guess what I'm asking is are you getting more fundamentalists than you are what you would consider moderates as you bring them in now?

GEN. STONE: No. In fact, I'm very careful about this. We actually have created a new -- I mean, I think I mentioned to you this new assessment program but this is actually a very elaborate process where they come in to a transition in barracks. You know, it takes about a week. They go through, you know, for imams evaluate them on religion and then we -- they actually take a government of Iraq educational assessment tool. So there's a whole bunch of things there.

But I have also now instituted in front of each one of the entry points at the theater internment facilities a assessment phase, and we take 72 hours and then we work really hard on categorizations. I think the one change that I have seen recently is we appear to be taking in more who would have a criminal content to them versus a counter coalition, you know, extremist perspective. In other words, the guys that seem to be being brought in now -- and I'd like to give you the right numbers on this, you know, because I'm there every week, you know, I'm sort of looking at this and sensing it but I think we all believe the kinds of guys we're seeing more of now are what I would broadly categorize as criminals. I mean, these are guys that, you know, were taking advantage of a situation, you know, are -- they just seem to have a criminal content to them more so than what I was dealing with way back in the April, May, June, July, August time frame.

So that's the one big change that I've seen. All the others are pretty balanced. I mean, the nature of those that come in and fight -- the al Qaeda members are still coming in -- being captured, rolled up, the -- (inaudible) -- groups are still there. You know, perhaps a few more Shi'a as a percentage than we've had but that has to do with the operations in the area in which they operate. But those guys are all the same. So I would say the largest percentage that appears to be higher are criminals. That's my personal assessment right now.

Q Right. Appreciate that.

MR. HOLT: Okay. And did -- somebody else joined us late. Who is there? Okay. Any -- I know we've just got a few more minutes. Any other follow-ups? Anything left?

Q Yeah, quick one. Colonel -- excuse me -- General, Andrew Lubin again. Beginning of last week there was a report surfacing there were 1,500 detainees released. Was -- pretty much at one time -- was this anything to do with your task force or where did the report come from or what detainees were released?

GEN. STONE: No. I don't do mass releases. I think I told you guys that before.

Q That's what I thought.

GEN. STONE: Yeah. I'm unquestionably opposed to mass releases. I do a release one at a time. Now, I might aggregate them, you know, into groups of -- as I've said earlier my average is I think about 49 a day. But I take every one of these guys as an individual case. Every one of them goes through individually. Every one of them goes through these courses. Every one of them gets assessed. Everyone goes before the panel. Everyone does an individual pledge. So I don't do mass releases and I haven't put any out. You know, the numbers that I've released -- the 3,300 under this new process -- have not had any mass releases, no big numbers, at least as long as I'm here. Unless ordered to do otherwise I'm not doing that. So I wouldn't know where that number came from.

I will tell you -- in fact, we had a press meeting yesterday with the Iraqi press and then today with the American press as background is because they're getting Iraqi corrections system and detainees very mixed up with coalition force detainee programs. So -- and I've even seen that in some of the -- you know, the great reporters we have they just -- they mix the two or three numbers and concepts in there. They're profoundly different. I mean, the guy who knows they're profoundly different is the detainee. He sure as shit doesn't want to be in a, you know, an Iraqi corrections system if he can avoid it. He knows that difference. So I don't know if that answered your question or not.

Q Okay. It wasn't yours. Great. It does as much as it can. Thank you.

MR. HOLT: All right, sir. And sir, do you have any final thoughts for us?

GEN. STONE: Well, you know, I would just say that the recent time line and data shows that these detainee numbers are not really increasing much as they are currently. That's a very, very optimistic observation. Our numbers have kind of leveled out for intakes versus outtakes and we're still focusing on releasing them like I said individually for the right time and the right place. I'm not going to be rushed. The CG's not going to be rushed. We're -- you know, we're ever vigilant about, you know, what these guys are going to do and, you know, if they're not a security risk then they'll get released and, you know, if they are they're going to be held. The boards are finding that the detainees frankly who have received their education tend to have a more -- education in these other programs tend to have a more moderate view. They tend to go back as productive citizens more so than they had before. Like I said, these initial trends of the recapture rate, you know, are encouraging but it's

not just the theater internment facility that has that effect. I think it's where they're going -- the tribes they're going back to. I mean, it's a combination of many things. I'd say that once a person's in custody we spend a lot of time learning about them now -- studying their motivations, and so we know an awful lot about who these guys are, why they're fighting, who they fight for more so than we've ever known before, and I think these key factors are learning lessons for us in terms of how to fight in a COIN environment out here. I think we really are trying to attack the main motivations of the insurgency. That's, you know, the employment issues, and going after them on the basics of education, voc tech, the reintegration services that we've got. And so, you know, our fight against the battle inside the wire has improved. It really has. It's dramatically better than in the past seven months.

The levels of violence and recruitment have decreased immensely and we'll look forward to giving you those -- the PAO will do that, and I think it can be attributed to great service members who have now taken on the COIN initiatives and come up with 30-some programs, some of which I just mentioned to you but all these programs are now working to intensely go after these detainees so that that they cannot conduct an insurgency inside the wire. They can't train, recruit, and be effective when they leave and they leave with a different perspective if not, you know, moderate view in some cases and more of an alliance and goodwill towards the coalition forces. And those numbers -- I mean, obviously that's a positive thing and so I just say that I think that it's really come down to the detainees -- these programs.

They do see a ray of hope. We see a ray of hope. The families are -- the family advocacy program which I didn't talk to you about that, you know, is -- the visitations are twice what they've been. Those guys feel safe enough to walk the distance to come visit them. So, anyway, it's guardedly optimistic and, you know, we'll just keep our head down and drive on and I thank you guys for covering this stuff. You know, I think it's -- I applaud you because, you know, I think it's fascinating and interesting. I think it's a perspective on the war that, you know, and a perspective on the greater war that you can only really gain when you're talking to these guys day in and day out and interrogating them and then figuring out how to work with them to get them to -- if not fight, I mean, I would hope someday maybe even work with us and, of course, by telling us who the bad guys are they are working with us so that's a good thing. MR. HOLT: Yes, sir, it is.

GEN. STONE: I don't know. That's all I've got, guys.

MR. HOLT: Well, thank you very much. U.S. Marine Corps Major General Douglas Stone, deputy commanding general for detainee operations, Multinational Force Iraq. Thank you very much for being with us and we look forward to speaking with you again, sir.

GEN. STONE: My honor, and I look forward to it. You guys are great guys. Thanks so much. You have a good day.

Q Major General, thanks for the time.

GEN. STONE: Ooh Rah!

END.